

Boxing clever at East Berkshire College See pages 10 & 11



Monday 27 February 2012

www.feweek.co.uk

Advisor to Boris



Profile of Sir Peter Rogers, advisor to the Mayor of London

Page 5

Minister reflects



Hayes on Apprenticeship Week, writing exclusively for *FE Week*

Pages 6

SFA may have breached data Code

FE Week Exclusive

Nick Reinis

[@fenickr](#)

The government's performance comparison site for further education is under heavy scrutiny after an investigation by *FE Week* into unannounced changes.

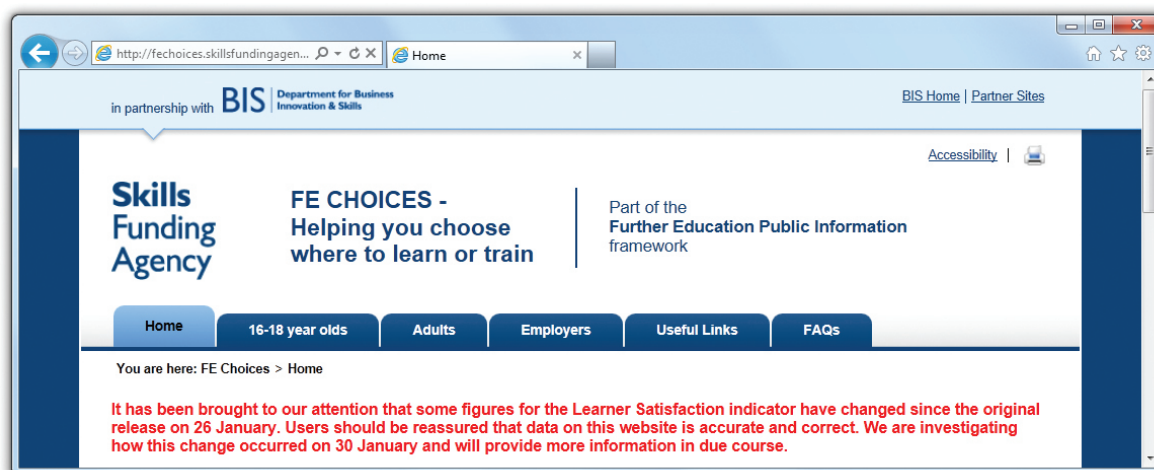
FE Choices, formerly known as the Framework for Excellence, was published by the Data Service, a part of the Skills Funding Agency, on January 26, but is now the focus of three inquiries.

FE Week found post publication alterations had been made to the Learner Satisfaction performance indicator - an aid for stakeholders, such as prospective students, to work out how a provider compares with average data for the same provider type and to all organisations which are on FE Choices.

However, despite the changes to comparable data fields neither the Agency, nor the Service, made a public announcement, which could leave them in breach of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics by the UK Statistics Authority.

The Code requires that prompt public announcements are made on errors which are discovered in statistical reports.

A statement issued on Thursday said the Agency is taking the allegations "very seriously" and



will investigate them in accordance with its Complaints Procedure, which will be undertaken by the Complaints Adjudicator.

It added: "The Agency cannot comment further until the investigation is complete."

The statement also confirmed that Skills Minister John Hayes has "sought an investigation" into the matter, before adding: "This request will be met through the completion of our thorough complaint investigation."

A spokesperson for the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) said they are committed to transparency.

The spokesperson said: "Mr Hayes has asked that the Skills Funding Agency begins an investigation and reports back to BIS."

"The department is fully committed to ensuring that statistical

information is transparent and fully compliant with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics."

A further inquiry is being conducted by the UK Statistics Authority after receiving "representations regarding the publication of statistics" on FE Choices.

A spokesperson for the Authority said: "The Authority has asked statisticians at the Department for Business, Innovation, and Skills, as the parent department of the Skills Funding Agency, for a report."

"We will independently review that report and determine what, if any, further investigations or statements by the Authority may be required."

The changes were brought to light when the Agency was presented with evidence on Tuesday.

Since then, the Agency has found that the amendments were made on

January 30, but says all data on the site is now "accurate and correct".

However, according to the data manager for FE Choices, who asked to remain anonymous, within a day of the data going live on January 26, it was found the figures were erroneous - with the changes made days later.

The data manager said this demonstrates "maladministration and disregard for the standards" and a lack of governance.

Speaking to *FE Week*, he said that the data should have been removed as soon as the error was found.

He said: "As soon as they knew there was an error they should have let stakeholders know. What they should have done is disabled the Learner Satisfaction pages."

"These pages should have been switched off, but they chose not to do that."

AoC conference



Exploring the implications of raising the participation age

Pages 12 & 13

Just a bit of fun



Spring into action and play our seasonal spot the difference

Page 16

inside...



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Subcontracting funding values published by SFA

Nick Summers
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Subcontractors with an overall allocation of more than £100,000 have been listed for the first time by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

New data published last week details more than 800 organisations and £434 million of public spending as of January 10, 2012.

The SFA says the list was generated following consultation with the sector and is in line with the government's transparency agenda.

"This exercise is about providing information back to the sector to help them to understand the supply chain in the sector and inform them of the commitments of the organisations with whom they may wish to subcontract," a SFA spokesperson said.

"We developed this format with representative organisations in the sector to present providers with the information that they want."

The list does not include however some of the information published in the 'Providers' Declaration of Sub-contractors' spreadsheet released by the SFA in January last year.

The minimum and maximum payment rates passed on to subcontractors, which show the percentage subcontractors keep following a management fee by lead providers, is noticeably absent.

The SFA told *FE Week*: "The management fee charged by a lead provider to a subcontractor can relate to a widely varying suite of services ranging from simple collation of data through to full support services, IT and premises.

"Publishing this data for comparison would be misleading."

The list was produced using the '2011/12 College and Training Organisation Declaration of Subcontractors form', which lead pro-

viders were required to complete and submit to the SFA by 13 July 2011.

Aspire Achieve Advance Limited does not hold a direct contract with the SFA and is the largest subcontractor on the list to receive funding from an FE college, with an aggregate contract value of more than £9.7 million.

The organisation delivers apprenticeships through Bloom and the Accounting Academy Partnership for institutions including Bedford College, North Hertfordshire College and Leeds City College, among others.

The list also includes Security Training School Limited, which came under fire last year for advertising two day fully funded NVQs, as well as 12 week apprenticeships on their website.

The firm is shown to be holding an aggregate subcontracting value of more than £2 million with Hull College, Leeds City College, Newham College of Further Education and Learning Curve (JAA) Limited.

The agency has revealed they are looking at refining the funding requirements for 2012/13, which will be published later this year and include subcontracting.

An SFA spokesperson said: "All of the funding requirements are subject to review and updating, so we do not expect there to be huge changes to subcontracting arrangements, just the regular review.

"All subcontracting must meet the same delivery, quality and value for money as the rest of our provision."

FE Week understands the SFA is under increasing pressure to publish the list in a spreadsheet format.

A spokesperson for the SFA told *FE Week*: "Supplying the information in a different electronic format is not something we plan to do, because we will have already made the information accessible in accordance with the stakeholder preference."

Apprenticeship evidence session

The first evidence session on an inquiry into apprenticeships will be held this week.

On Thursday, the Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Select Committee will welcome experts from different stages of the apprenticeship programme.

Denis A Hird, chief executive of JTL Training, Alex Jackman, senior policy officer for the Forum of Private Business, and Graham Hoyle, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), will all give evidence on the day.

The session will be open to the public on a first come, first served basis, in The Grimond Room, Portcullis House, at 11am.

The Committee had already previously announced that it will be visiting Sheffield as part of its inquiry.

They will hold a number of formal oral evidence sessions between March 5-6 with employers who promote or offer apprenticeships, as well as learners currently enrolled on apprenticeship schemes.

Adrian Bailey MP, chairman of the BIS Select Committee, said: "Sheffield is home to a number of significant organisations and employers offering innovative and meaningful apprenticeship schemes.

"This is something that is being replicated right across the UK and is something the Committee wants to experience first-hand.

"Visiting Sheffield will allow the Committee to take evidence from a wide range of interested parties. This is a hugely important inquiry; apprenticeships are vital to boosting employment and growth throughout the country.

"The Committee feels it is vital that apprenticeships are structured in such a way so as to maximise their potential and to provide young people in the UK with requisite skills for future success."

The deadline for written evidence to be submitted to the BIS Select Committee has closed.

Families tsar to step down amid fraud allegations

Nick Summers
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Emma Harrison is to step down from her role as the Prime Minister's "families tsar" following allegations of fraud at her firm A4e.

In a statement published by the BBC on Thursday, Ms Harrison said: "I have asked to step aside from my voluntary role as Family Champion as I do not want the current media environment to distract from the very important work with troubled families.

"I remain passionate about helping troubled families and I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute in an area where I have been active for many years."

The government has been urged by Margaret Hodge MP, chairwoman of the Public Accounts Committee, to suspend its welfare-to-work contracts with A4e.

It came after it was revealed police were investigating 'irregularities' at the firm, which A4e say dates back to 2010 - according

to the BBC.

Four employees were arrested in relation to the allegation and released on bail until mid-March.

Andrew Dutton, CEO of the A4e Group, said: "A4e has zero tolerance towards fraud, and any instance of fraudulent or otherwise illegal activity is completely unacceptable.

"We take our responsibility very seriously and we are committed to using taxpayer's money effectively and efficiently to deliver the best services to the public."

The employment agency A4e, which has five main contracts to deliver the Work Programme, has come under fire from MPs because of its poor track record and large shareholder dividends.

Mr Dutton admitted in a session with the Public Accounts Committee that the UK turnover for A4e in 2011, estimated to be between £160 million and £180 million, came solely from government contracts.

Ms Harrison received 87 per cent of the £11 million paid in dividends to the company's

five shareholders last year.

Mrs Hodge criticised the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) during the session for not considering the past performance of firms, including A4e, when managing the contract process.

"It seemed rather surprising to me that in managing the contract process, you did not have regard to the past performance of contractors," Mrs Hodge said.

She later added that A4e's past performance was "abysmal" during the Pathways to Work scheme.

"If you, as a sensible person, were letting a contract in your home for anything or if you were a private business, you would look at past performance before you decided," she added.

Subcontractors of A4e on the Work Programme include Havering College of Further and Higher Education, Accrington & Rossendale College, Blackpool and Fylde College, Liverpool Community College, Highbury College, among others.



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Minister announces funding for FE teachers

Nick Reinis

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Bursaries of up to £1,500 are to be given to up to 11,000 trainers undertaking initial teacher education (ITE) to teach in further education.

Skills minister John Hayes, who originally set out his plans for the bursary at the Association of Colleges' (AoC) Annual Conference in November, formally set out the funding available to those undertaking ITE on Thursday.

However, critics have already suggested that the money may not be enough in light of hefty tuition fees charged by some universities.

Lee Davies, president of Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering (CIPHE), said: "This will barely scratch the itch if universities maintain the fees position they have been stating recently.

"So it's just 'hip' from me - one cheer out of three - and I will wait and see the full economic picture.

"Certainly for CIPHE's members considering a further education teaching career, a bursary of £1,000 will do little to ease their move into FE if they are still faced with the double-whammy of an almost inevitable salary drop and HE fees in the thousands of pounds."

Toni Fazaeli, chief executive of the Institute for Learning (IfL), welcomed the news



"To ensure that our teachers are the best in the world and have access to HE I can announce today that we will introduce a bursary for initial teacher training"

John Hayes at the AoC Annual Conference 2011
Picture by Nick Linford for FE Week

but also warned that caution remains over tuition fees.

She said: "It is excellent to see the government acknowledging that FE teaching and training is vital to the economy and society and is a high-level profession.

"IfL believes that the teaching and training profession should be seen as an attractive and accessible career progression route by those in industry who decide to give something back by teaching in their specialist field.

"We have long been calling for a bursary scheme for FE teacher trainees and our members see this as a priority issue, especially in the light of the higher education tuition fee

increases this year."

However, she added: "We remain concerned about the tuition fee increases and hope this announcement relieves, to some extent, concerns from higher education institutions about the financial viability of their FE ITT provision.

"We await further details about the availability and distribution of the new bursaries and how they will link with the existing ITT grant that IfL distributes on behalf of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills."

When making his announcement last year, Mr Hayes alluded to making compara-

ble money available in FE to that of those undertaking initial teacher training (ITT) in schools - which is between £5,000 to £20,000.

However, for 2012-13 bursaries of £1,000 are available for 10,000 trainees to take either the Higher Education Institution (HEI)-accredited Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) or a Level 6 PGCE qualification.

Another 1,000 trainees can apply for bursaries of £1,500 if they are taking a HEI-accredited ITE course and intending to teach basic Maths and English.

Mr Hayes said: "It is a powerful demonstration of the government's wholehearted commitment to the FE and skills sector that despite the current financial pressures and in challenging times, we are looking to secure the talents and skills of potential FE teachers.

"Recruiting the best talent is central to making the sector as good as it can be.

"Further Education is at the heart of economic revival; at the core of social renewal."

Despite the significant difference between the bursary in FE and that which is existing in schools, the IfL believes similarity should "remain the goal" and there should be "support for trainee teachers undertaking awarding body routes" to teaching qualifications.

Ms Fazaeli said: "There is clearly still more to be done and IfL will continue to make the case for equitable access routes in to teaching and training in our sector."

Increasing NEETs linked to EMA cut

Nick Reinis

@fenickr

Rising numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) are being linked to the axing of the education maintenance allowance (EMA).

Latest data, released today by the Department for Education (DfE), shows the proportion of 16-18 year-olds classified as being NEET increased by one per cent to 9.6 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2011 (178,000), compared to 2010 (162,000).

The DfE in their statistical release say the increase is not "statistically significant" and instead point to the decline of 16-18 year-olds who are in work - down from 47 per cent to 40 per cent - as being noteworthy.

However, the Save EMA campaign have compiled analysis which shows a decline in NEET statistics in every Quarter 4 for 16-18 year-olds after the allowance's introduction in 2004, before a rise last year - after the EMA was scrapped.

The scheme was replaced by the £180 million Bursary Fund last year which ministers say is "more targeted" than the EMA.

James Mills, head of Save EMA, said: "The sad news that the number of NEETs is up is further proof that scrapping the EMA was a massive mistake by this government. Previous Q4 figures have shown a steady decline in the number of NEETs and are indicative proof that EMA worked. By scrapping EMA this government is creating a lost generation of young people and these figures are proof that there

is now a growing invisible army of teenagers who have been cut loose by this government's decision to scrap EMA."

Save EMA say the importance of Quarter 4 data is it shows those teenagers who have not enrolled into further education after September of that year. They also admit that NEET figures could be caused by a "flagging" economy.

However, when coupled with the Association of Colleges' (AoC) survey in October, which showed enrolment at 49 per cent of colleges was down, and last month's unemployment figures, showing an increase in 16-17 year old unemployment, Save EMA say "these NEET figures are further indicative proof that scrapping EMA was the wrong decision."

Meanwhile, the figures also show the proportion of 19-24-year-old NEETs decreased by 0.1 per cent - but the figure rose from 777,000 to 780,000.

The proportion for 16-24-year-old NEETs increased by 0.3 per cent - from 939,000 to 958,000.

However, the government is determined to tackle the problem.

A government spokesperson said: "The number of young people who are not in education, employment or training has been too high for too long - we are determined to bring the numbers down.

"We are making sure young people have the skills they need to get ready for work - creating the biggest apprenticeships programme our country has ever seen and overhauling vocational education, so all employers can be confident about the rigour of our qualifications." For in depth analysis of one of the new government schemes to tackle NEETs, see page 4.

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T R I B A L



FE Week investigates

The Youth Contract for 16-17 year-olds

Nick Summers
@SummersNicholas

The Deputy Prime Minister has unveiled a new scheme to try and tackle the “ticking time bomb” of 16 and 17 year-olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Nick Clegg announced a £126 million allocation last week to help more than 55,000 teenagers with no GCSES at grade A* to C.

The new scheme is part of the youth contract announced last November and will use a ‘black-box’ payment-by-results scheme for businesses and charities.

Mr Clegg, speaking at the Groundwork Hub in south east London, said: “Sitting at home with nothing to do when you’re so young can knock the stuffing out of you for years.

“It is a tragedy for the young people

involved – a ticking time bomb for the economy and our society as a whole.

“This problem isn’t new, but in the current economic climate we urgently need to step up efforts to ensure some of our most troubled teenagers have the skills, confidence and opportunities to succeed.”

The scheme offers a maximum of £2,200 in funding per young person

The announcement follows record levels of youth unemployment, now at 1.04 million, as well as a significant rise in the number of people not in employment, education

or training (NEET), released by the Department for Education (DfE) last week.

Graham Hoyle, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), said: “This is what AELP has been pressing for over many months since it became apparent that youth unemployment was on the increase.

“We are pleased that the DfE has listened to our calls that their NEET programmes should offer training providers maximum flexibility in offering personalised solutions to individuals to overcome the barriers that prevent them from securing a job or further learning.

“For too long, government funded schemes for 16 to 18 year-olds have been too tightly linked to securing a qualification, when first landing a job as a result of a scheme might be a better outcome for the individual.”

The new scheme, which will offer firms a maximum of £2,200 for helping a young person back into education, employment or training, has been designed to try and support teenagers who are at the greatest risk of long-term disengagement.

Businesses and charities will receive an initial payment for taking on a young person, followed by payments based on a successful outcome of re-engagement and sustained re-engagement of at least five months.

A document detailing the contract information for the scheme, written by the Young People’s Learning Agency (YPLA), DfE and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), shows that an initial payment will only be made once a young person has “an effective and clear action plan” for re-engagement.

The deadline for submitting the pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) is March 5

The initial payment will be no more than 20 per cent of the ‘unit cost’ for any young person starting the programme before September 2013, reducing to 10 per cent for any learner accepted thereafter.

A re-engagement payment, made up of no more than 30 per cent of the ‘unit cost’, will be issued for positive outcomes including full-time education or training, participation in an apprenticeship or a job with accredited training, or attending part-time education with re-engagement provision for at least three months.

Payments for sustained outcomes, which start at 50 per cent of the ‘unit cost’ but rise to 60 per cent after September 2013, will be given out once a young person has completed at least five months of their chosen education or training.

The document suggests the support could

be personal, one to one help and advice, specialist support to keep young people safe and well, or free from drugs or alcohol.

Neil Carberry, director for employment and skills policy at CBI, said: “This announcement is a step forward, but we remain concerned that this programme does not go far enough.

“We still need to see urgent action in schools to minimise the risk of young people becoming NEETs in the first place, through better careers and study advice and improved business-school links.

“It is right that private and third-sector providers are tasked with delivering this initiative on a payment-by-results basis, but they will need to work closely with local authorities, schools and other public agencies to make sure the scheme delivers.”

The document says organisations will

“We are looking forward to receivwing some innovative ideas that really work from experienced organisations in all sectors”

need to set out a detailed pricing model over the lifetime of the contract once they are invited to submit a bid at the invitation to tender (ITT) stage.

The deadline for submitting the pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) is March 5.

The ITT document will then be sent to shortlisted organisations by March 20, with full tender submissions to the YPLA closing on May 02.

The document states each bid will need to demonstrate the organisation’s ability to deliver on the programme, as well as a detailed track record of relevant successful experience.

Children and Young People’s Minister Tim Loughton said: “Providers know how best to support young people back into education training and employment.

“We are looking forward to receiving some innovative ideas that really work from experienced organisations in all sectors.”

Contract amounts in each region will be proportionate to the amount of NEETs calculated to be in each area during 2010.

The government has emphasised that successful organisations will also need to sign a declaration confirming they will not apply for funds through the programme if they are receiving a similar type of provision elsewhere.

Ambitious contracting timetable

Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) published	21 February 2012
Deadline for clarification question and answers on PQQ	28 February 2012 12 noon
Deadline for PQQ’s to be received by YPLA	05 March 2012 17:00
Evaluate responses, agree short list for Invitation to Tender (ITT) ,and inform successful and unsuccessful applicants	6 - 19 March 2012 (compliance checking and training will take place on 6 March)
Invitation To Tender (ITT) document dispatched to PQQ short listed organisations	20 March 2012
ITT Workshop with PQQ short listed organisations	22 March 2012
Deadline for ITT Q & A	23 April 2012 12 noon
Full tender submissions to YPLA	02 May 2012 17:00
ITT evaluation and moderation complete	03 May - 24 May 2012
Award decision ratified	29 May 2012
Notification letters sent to successful and unsuccessful applicants)	30 th May 2012
Standstill period end	14 th June 2012
Contract Award	15 th June 2012
Contract clarification meetings, prepare, exchange and sign and contracts	by the end of June 2012
Service Delivery Commence	As soon as possible in July-August 2012

Source: Youth Contract – Support for 16-17 Year Olds who are Not in Education, Employment or Training. Download in full from www.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk

FE Week profile

Sir Peter Rogers ~ his story

Janet Murray

@Jan_Murray

London Mayor's Advisor for Regeneration, Growth and Enterprise talks to *FE Week*

Sir Peter Rogers recognised the value of vocational learning at an early age. At 18, having researched possible routes into accountancy - seven years with a degree, four without - he decided to leave school and train on the job.

Brought up in Wolverhampton, Rogers, now Boris Johnson's economic development advisor, attended Wednesfield Grammar School, and as one of the high fliers in his year group was expected to go to university. Breaking the news to his working class parents - a furnaceman and a shop assistant - who already had made "big sacrifices" to support him in his education, was hard, but made perfect sense at the time.

"I guess I was quite self-aware," he recalls. "I knew the sort of things that I was good at, the sort of things I was interested in and recognised the path that would get me to a reasonably good salary pretty quickly, through hard work and application."

It was a move that paid off. Rogers spent 16 years in accountancy and financial roles in local authorities, before moving to a national transport operator, where he was involved with trade union negotiations as part of a management buyout.

In 1996, he joined Westminster Council, where he became chief executive, before moving to the London Development Agency (LDA), where he was awarded a knighthood for his work, something he still finds "embarrassing."

Much of the hard work was down to people like Simon Milton (Johnson's former chief of staff who died last year) and real partnership working between public servants and politicians, he says. "To be honest I really don't know why I got it," he says, modestly. "You start looking round at people who deserve it and I honestly couldn't work out why I got it."

While he is passionate about his home city of Wolverhampton (where he still has a home), and his beloved football team "The Wolves," Rogers has a soft spot for London. In fact he came out of retirement to take on his current role (his second retirement, having bowed out of Westminster Council in 2008).

And he is clearly proud of the Greater London Authority's (GLA) work on vocational learning. Since the launch of its apprenticeship campaign in 2010, an average of around 5,000 new vacancies have been created each month, he says, and he is confident the GLA can reach its target of 100,000 by the end of this year. Around 2,000 of those opportunities have been created within the GLC itself or through its

procurement process with organisations like Transport for London (TfL) and Crossrail. The GLA is also working hard to increase take up amongst small and medium sized businesses to take on apprentices, he says.

Last month, Johnson announced £177 million funding towards long-term improvements to regenerate high streets across London in a bid to create jobs and stimulate economic growth - on top of 70 million pledged to help repair and rebuild town centres damaged in last summer's riots.

While this represents an opportunity for London colleges, many will need to up their game and become "a lot more commercial," says Rogers. "There is a challenge for FE to be much more aware of the business opportunities, the business dynamics and the community dynamics... but they need to actually start talking and competing with each other about the quality of their work, the quality of their product and the sustainability of what they're achieving."

Rogers advocates a system (similar to that proposed by the universities' minister David Willetts) where colleges are "an open and transparent book," publishing information about how many of their former learners move into employment and what exactly they go on to do.

He bats off the suggestion that the demise of the regional development agencies (RDAs) as a result of the Coalition government's quango bonfire, could make this difficult for colleges. Things are tough for everyone involved in education and training at the moment, he says. "I think there's a significant difference in the last few years because there was a lot of money in the system until the crash in 2008. There was lots of money, people could basically self generate work and self

"There is a challenge for FE to be much more aware of the business opportunities, the business dynamics and the community dynamics"

generate their own importance. Those days have gone, every scrap of public sector money now is going to be based on value created and it's going to have to be demonstrated."

And he sidesteps the topic of the London Skills and Employment Board (LSEB) the employer led group, chaired by Johnson, responsible for improving adult skills and employment in the capital, which seemed to inexplicably fade away about 18 months ago.

After the abolition of RDAs in June 2010, the government announced plans for the



creation of local enterprise partnerships (locally owned partnerships between local authorities and businesses that aim to create local jobs and drive economic growth). Plans for London's LEP, which will be chaired by Johnson and Harvey McGrath - chairman of the Prudential - are well underway, and while Rogers admits the demise of the LSEB has left a gap, he will not be drawn on the reasons it seemed to end too suddenly.

Rogers is a big fan of the Big Society approach to rebuilding and regenerating communities, which he says is at the heart of Team London, the GLC new volunteering programme aimed at cutting crime and creating opportunities for young people. "It's a simple challenge which is about communities taking care of their own futures by becoming involved in their own quality of life issues," he says. "And if that means kids go out on the streets and pick up litter to make the place look better so the shops actually attract people, if it means they work with disadvantaged kids who can't read by becoming readers, if it means that businesses and lucky graduates who are in jobs come back and either coach disadvantaged kids or help business by mentoring business... I think those are the sort of new dynamics, and I think colleges could be at the heart of that."

But with youth unemployment at all-time high, isn't this just an excuse to get people to work for nothing, I ask him. "Is

there anything wrong with that?" he fires back "How many people in January say 'I'm going to lose weight, I'll go to the gym four times a week' - how many do it?" he says. "Not many. The ones that do have got an attitude about persistence, diligence and they put the discipline in to make it happen. It's exactly the same as getting up five days a week and going to work... it's about discipline, it's about turning up, it's about doing the work while you're there and seeing the results - and it's perfectly transferable into the workplace."

He seems convinced that volunteering can unlock the potential of young people, creating the "rigour and discipline" necessary to get even hardest to reach into work. But who exactly will run these community projects? While he has all the jargon - "champions," "visible ambassadors" and "community leaders" - there are no firm answers for exactly who these people might be.

Having already made two comebacks from retirement, Rogers is relaxed about his future career plans. He'll certainly be sticking around until the mayoral elections in May, the outcome of which will determine whether his contract at GLC is renewed. But despite a long and distinguished career in local government, his biggest ambition is surprisingly humble. "I'd like The Wolves to stay in the premier league - you can tell I'm a romantic, can't you?"

FE Week Expert

Promoting the positive in Functional Skills



Learners like them, teachers like them, Employers like them. This is the message we are hearing from the field. Of course, not all teachers and not all providers are on board, but those that have grasped that the Functional Skills qualifications offer learners a better deal are beginning to develop a sense of excitement. But, there are a number of issues blocking the successful implementation of the strategy.

Ten years after the launch of the Skills for Life strategy, NIACE embarked on its Inquiry into adult numeracy, and subsequently the Inquiry into adult literacy. We were pleased that our Inquiry fed directly into the Department's own Review of Skills for Life.

One of the major areas of discussion in this closed group was the difficulties with the 'old' Skills for Life qualifications and the gradual emergence of the GCSE as the 'gold standard' and Functional Skills as the English and Maths element.

Over the past couple of weeks, it has been made clear that enrolments for standalone Skills for Life (Entry Level 1 - Level 2) qualifications, will cease after August 31. New Functional Skills (English and maths) and GCSE equivalents will be the qualifications for adult learners with literacy and numeracy needs, alongside 'standalone, unitised awards' which are still being scoped, while Skills for Life Entry Level qualifications will stay in the short term.

Functional Skills provide a single ladder of achievement from Entry Level to Level 2, for all learners in all sectors. They are a compulsory element in the three qualification routes for young people from 14 to 19; in Diploma and Foundation Learning Tier; and an option to GCSEs, within apprenticeships. They are also offered as stand-alone qualifications at Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2.

NIACE believes that Functional Skills will support adults to undertake the realistic basic skills demands of everyday life, developing, as

we believe they do, the ability to apply skills to other settings. With some more work to address the needs of those learners with the poorest skills, at Entry Level, they will offer better quality literacy and numeracy skills to adults.

Training providers developing their ability to offer Functional Skills within apprenticeships and employers taking on the apprentices tell us that they fit well as an embedded element of vocational courses; the emphasis on transferability was valued by providers.

There are challenges - it may take longer for learners to achieve and Functional Skills will be more challenging for all learners and especially at lower levels. The assessment is more rigorous and includes writing as well as speaking and listening - this will come as very good news to teachers who have been unhappy with the partial nature of the Skills for Life qualifications, with its lack of emphasis on speaking and listening, and on writing.

“NIACE believes that Functional Skills will support adults to undertake the realistic basic skills demands of everyday life”

We cannot ignore the challenges and we are hopeful all the agencies supporting adult learners will work together to make the transition as effective as possible. We need a strategic CPD offer; we need a clear idea of which resources are helpful and have proven worth and impact rather than those that have just been brought (too) hastily to the market to address a perceived need; we need to consider if we require Functional Skills-specific Initial and Diagnostic Assessment tools. And we need clear guidance on how we manage the additional time and resources that delivering Functional Skills will require.

But most of all, the message coming out loud and clear is - why aren't Functional Skills being sold to employers, providers, teachers and learners? Let's get out there, with some real voices of some real learners and teachers, and promote all the positive aspects of Functional Skills.

We recognise that Functional Skills provide learners with the ability to think and act independently at home and in the workplace - but we have to grasp the nettle right now if we really want this to work.

Carol Taylor, Director for Development and Research at NIACE



Reflecting on National Apprenticeship Week

Last year, I launched National Apprenticeship Week 2011 by saying that I wanted to create the biggest and best apprenticeships programme in our country's history.

Thanks to record Government investment, the commitment of British firms, tough measures to drive up standards and the hard work and dedication of FE & Skills professionals, I'm proud to say that we have achieved that aim.

One year on, as we approached National Apprenticeship Week 2012, new official statistics revealed a record numbers of apprenticeship starts - a 63.5% increase on 2009/10, and outstanding success rates and growth across all regions and sectors.

The NAO also recognised the progress we've made, with their Assessment of Adult Apprenticeships report highlighting the extraordinary economic benefits of apprenticeships. It found that for every £1 of Government spending on apprenticeships £18 is generated for the wider economy.

National Apprenticeship Week is a great opportunity to take time to celebrate the countless achievements of learners and employers over the past year. This year, as always, I was extremely impressed by the stories I hear and the focus and dedication of everyone I meet.

However, there is more we can, and will, do to drive up quality, open up more opportunities for young people and put vocational accomplishment on an equal footing to academic achievement.

To ensure that the growth in apprenticeship numbers we have delivered is sustainable, quality must match quantity so that employers and learners know that every apprenticeship delivers world class training.

We are working with the SFA and other partners to raise the bar on quality, recognise

excellence and drive out poor performance. We have tightened guidance for those developing apprenticeships and training providers that do not meet the high standards learners deserve are having their funding withdrawn. An employer-led review into apprenticeship standards, to report in late spring 2012, will identify best practice and help ensure that government continues to maximise the impact of public investment in apprenticeships.

A zero tolerance approach to unnecessary red tape, alongside new financial incentives, will enable more SMEs to take advantage of the competitive edge that having apprentices can bring to a company. Businesses with fewer than 50 employees can now apply for a £1,500 incentive payment when they take on their first young apprentice. In addition to this, a review - led by social entrepreneur and jeweller Jason Holt - will examine what more can be done to help SMEs take on apprentices.

The Prime Minister officially opened the second round of bidding for the Higher Apprenticeships Fund during Apprenticeship Week. With 19,000 higher apprenticeships already created as a result of the first round, this latest injection of funding will enable even more apprentices to develop their talents to degree level and beyond, as well as giving firms in sectors such as advanced manufacturing, information technology and engineering the hi-tech skills they need to grow. The fund is a crucial step towards placing vocational learning on a par with academic study, giving bright youngsters the opportunity to work with and build the most dynamic firms in the country.

Looking forward to National Apprenticeship Week 2013, I strongly believe that we will continue to build on our achievements to-date, putting apprenticeships back where they belong - at the heart of our system of education and training.

John Hayes, Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning

FE Week Expert

Professionalising welfare-to-work is important

Historically the welfare-to-work industry, which employs in the region of 20,000 people, has had no occupational standards or designated Sector Skills Council, no required entry qualifications or recognised professional qualifications. Very little of the training for the employability sector's workforce that has been delivered has been externally accredited.

Various pieces of research highlighted the need to improve the industry's approach to training and developing its people. It was recognised that the ability of welfare to work providers in the independent and college sectors to attract and retain the best people, who were able to work at a confident and competent level, providing personalised and expert support was going to be critical to the success of the Work Programme. To achieve this, it was vital that the status of practitioners such as the personal advisor role was enhanced through the provision of a framework of professional qualifications and clear career pathways.

In 2010 the sector agreed to address what professional standards and qualifications were required within a flexible framework, which focused on improved productivity, reduced attrition and the attraction of high calibre people into the sector. Sector employers came together to create the PoWER (Professionalisation of Welfare to Work Expert Reference) Group. The PoWER group, chaired by Janette Faherty OBE of Avanta, consisted of AELP, DWP prime contractors, subcontractors, private and voluntary sector employers, plus Inclusion and ERSA.

PoWER created a project group, funded by PoWER members, specifically to look at the qualifications and the creation of an overarching professional body for the industry. Working closely with the awarding body EDI, the project team were able to use the flexibilities of the QCF to design and develop a flexible and accessible framework of qualifications closely aligned to job roles across the sector.

Many of the units came from existing QCF qualifications in customer service, recruitment, sales and information advice and guidance with the addition of two new sector specific units, Understanding the Employment Related Services Sector and Sustaining an Employment Outcome, which were written by members of the project group.

“The whole of the FE and skills sector can learn from the success of the PoWER group”

The level 3 award, Certificate and Diploma in Employment Related Services, which together with an Advanced Apprenticeship make up the Employment Related Services Qualification Framework, has been developed for people working with the unemployed, supporting them to progress into sustainable employment. The suite of qualifications allows the

industry to set the bar on the high standards expected from employees and the quality service they provide, whilst giving individuals an opportunity to be able to accredit the skills, knowledge and experience they have gained against national standards. By offering clear career paths with greater opportunities for progression, the industry expects to enhance performance and motivation amongst its workforce leading to greater productivity and uplifts in the number of sustained job outcomes achieved.

The take-up of new qualifications for those working in the employability industry is gathering momentum. Over 25 providers have now been approved to offer the qualifications and the first candidate to complete the Diploma is waiting to be awarded their certificate.

The whole of the FE and skills sector can learn from the success of the PoWER group. They have demonstrated how effectively employers can work together to develop standards and qualifications that really meet the needs of their businesses. A shared drive and passion enabled the new suite of qualifications and Advanced Apprenticeship framework to be developed from scratch in less than six months which is a remarkable achievement.

Too often the processes involved in bringing qualifications to market is unwieldy and time consuming, but by having a clear vision of what they wanted to achieve and working closely with both EDI and Skills for Justice, the PoWER group has been able to overcome



barriers and found ways of fast tracking the accreditation process.

The journey is not over. Partner organisations working together generated a successful bid to UKCES for funding to support the establishment of the Institute for Employability Professionals and secured further success in a tender to NAS for Higher Apprenticeship Funding; the latter was led by AELP member and leading Higher Apprentice training provider Babington Business College.

Stella Turner is AELP's qualifications and curriculum manager and a member of the PoWER project group

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Learning & skills ~ events, consultancy and training

FE Week gets technical ~ Youth Contract

This week we reproduce information from the Department for Education (DfE) Youth Contract tendering document (see page 4)

Source: Youth Contract – Support for 16-17 Year Olds who are Not in Education, Employment or Training. Published by the DfE

Name of sub regional lots <small>We wish to procure services at regional level and expect to issue 12 contracts covering each of the geographical areas</small>	Number of NEETS in 2010	Indicative contract amounts per area
SOUTH EAST (A) (includes the following 6 local authority areas: Brighton & Hove, East Sussex, West Sussex, Kent, Medway, Surrey)	3,672	£9,367,843
SOUTH EAST (B) (includes the following 13 local authority areas: Bracknell Forest, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire, Portsmouth, Reading, Slough, Southampton, West Berkshire, Windsor & Maidenhead, Wokingham)	3,470	£8,854,098
LONDON NORTH (includes the following 21 local authority areas: Barking & Dagenham, Enfield, Haringey, Hackney, Havering, Newham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Barnet, Brent, City of London, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Camden, Islington, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, Westminster)	3,317	£8,463,731
LONDON SOUTH (includes the following 12 local authority areas: Bexley, Bromley, Croyden, Greenwich, Kingston, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Richmond, Southwark, Sutton, Wandsworth)	1,921	£4,900,791
EAST OF ENGLAND (includes the following 11 local authority areas: Bedford Borough, Cambridgeshire, Central Bedfordshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Luton, Norfolk, Peterborough, Southend, Suffolk, Thurrock)	5,368	£13,695,096
SOUTH WEST (includes the following 16 local authority areas: Bath & NE Somerset, Bournemouth, Bristol, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Isles of Scilly, North Somerset, Plymouth, Poole, Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Swindon, Torbay, Wiltshire)	4,359	£11,120,602
WEST MIDLANDS (includes the following 14 local authorities areas: Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Herefordshire, Sandwell, Shropshire, Solihull, Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, Telford & Wrekin, Walsall, Warwickshire, Wolverhampton, Worcestershire)	5,679	£14,488,508
EAST MIDLANDS (includes the following 9 local authorities areas: Derby City, Derbyshire, Leicester City, Leicestershire County, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Rutland*)	3,881	£9,901,180
YORKSHIRE & HUMBER - excludes Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield (includes the following 12 local authority areas: Barnsley, Calderdale, Doncaster, East Riding, Kingston upon Hull, Kirklees, North East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire, Rotherham, Sheffield, York)	4,217	£10,758,640
MANCHESTER & CHESHIRE (includes the following 12 local authority areas: Bolton, Bury, Cheshire East, Cheshire West & Chester, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Warrington, Wigan)	3,967	£10,120,851
MERSEYSIDE, LANCASHIRE & CUMBRIA (excludes Liverpool) (includes the following 10 local authority areas: Blackburn-Darwen, Blackpool, Cumbria, Halton, Knowsley, Lancashire County, Sefton, St. Helens, Wirral)	3,482	£8,884,299
NORTH EAST (excludes Newcastle and Gateshead) (includes the following 10 local authority areas: County Durham, Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar & Cleveland, South Tyneside, Stockton on Tees, Sunderland)	2,546	£6,494,447

Analysis on months NEET by various characteristics

The data on NEET durations comes from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE). This survey tracked the background, behaviour and work/educational outcomes of young people from the age of 14 to 20, from the year 2004 to 2010. Tables 1-3 give data on NEET durations in two forms, firstly showing the distribution of time spent NEET separated out by different characteristics, e.g. by gender or ethnicity or by attainment in Year 11 (the main GCSE year at school) in the 21 months after compulsory schooling ended. It also shows the average number of months spent NEET out of those 21 months for each category.

The value of the average months NEET measure is that it is fairly robust as it covers a long period – we know that for many young people, being NEET can be a very temporary state, or their activities can show rapid cycling between employment and unemployment and / or participation in education. Looking at their activity over an extended 21 month period will tend to smooth out these transitions, and provide a more robust indicator of what behaviours and background factors are related to whether a young person is at increased risk of being NEET.

The NEET durations data adds further value – it reveals the risk factors most related to young people tending to be disengaged for a sustained period – in this case defined as NEET for at least 6 months out of the 21 following compulsory schooling (i.e. after Year 11).

Relating months NEET to demographic and family background factors		Cohort (%)	Months NEET in 21 months from Sept 2006 (from age 16, after compulsory schooling)				Ave months NEET (out of 21 possible) number
			None	1 month	2 - 5 months	At least 6 months	
			%	%	%	%	
ALL		100%	82.6	1.6	4.9	11.0	1.5
Sex of respondent	Male	50%	80.6	1.8	5.7	11.9	1.6
	Female	50%	84.6	1.4	4.0	10.0	1.4
Ethnic origin	White	85%	81.7	1.7	5.2	11.4	1.6
	Mixed	2%	83.7	0.5	4.7	11.1	1.5
	Indian	2%	94.1	0.3	1.2	4.4	0.5
	Pakistani	2%	82.6	1.1	3.6	12.7	1.8
	Bangladeshi	1%	81.9	1.9	5.4	10.8	1.4
	Other Asian	1%	93.8	-	3.3	2.9	0.5
	Black African	2%	95.7	0.2	1.6	2.5	0.4
	Black Caribbean	1%	82.2	0.9	3.7	13.2	1.6
	Other	1%	90.1	0.8	2.4	6.7	0.7
	Unknown / not stated	1%	85.9	0.9	2.7	10.5	1.4
Family socio-economic class	Higher professional	7%	92.6	1.0	2.5	3.9	0.5
	Lower professional	37%	90.0	1.2	3.7	5.2	0.7
	Intermediate	19%	84.7	1.5	5.1	8.8	1.3
	Lower supervisory	8%	77.7	1.8	6.1	14.4	1.9
	Routine	17%	71.9	2.9	7.3	18.0	2.5
	Other/not classified	12%	68.9	1.5	5.5	24.1	3.4
Highest parental qual	Degree	22%	93.0	0.8	3.0	3.3	0.5
	At least 1 A-level	21%	87.4	1.5	4.3	6.8	1.0
	Below A-level / Not sure	57%	76.8	2.0	5.8	15.4	2.1

Gender and ethnicity are not very strongly related to time spent NEET, though young people from Indian and Black African ethnic minority backgrounds are less likely to be sustained NEET.

Disadvantage is strongly related to time spent NEET between 16 and 17, with over 1 in 5 young people who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) being NEET for at least 6 months, and a similar proportion of young people whose parent(s) are either in routine work or not working NEET for at least 6 months.

Relating months NEET to school-related factors

The strongest school-related predictors of being NEET are low (1-4 passes at GCSE grades D-G) or no attainment following Year 11, or the young person either being excluded or persistently truanting from school – the average experience of young people falling into any of those groups was to spend around 6 months NEET after compulsory schooling.

Those young people with Special Educational Needs and disabilities were significantly more likely to become NEET for longer than their peers. Overall, more than a fifth of young people with a health problem or disability spent over six months NEET, being over twice as likely to do so than those without.

Only a small proportion of young people or their parents (3 – 4 per cent) intend for them to move straight from school to full-time work, but for those who do, the transition is more likely to be challenging; around 1 in 2 spend some time NEET, and over 1 in 3 are NEET for at least 6 months.

Relating months NEET to behaviour and caring responsibilities

Young parents are the group with the single greatest likelihood of spending a long period NEET, with more than three fifths of these young people having been NEET for more than six months at age 16-17.

Alcohol is not a risk factor unless the young person is drinking very regularly, although other behaviours displayed whilst still in school, such as smoking, trying cannabis, fighting, shoplifting, vandalising or graffitiing property all increase the risk of NEET, particularly if it leads to the police becoming involved

FE Week campus round-up



Bolton College step up to the crease with Lancashire County Cricket Club

Visually impaired learners at Bolton College were given an afternoon of Blind Cricket coaching by Lancashire County Cricket Club.

The Club is supporting a campaign to raise awareness of cricket for the visually impaired and blind by encouraging more people to participate in the sport. Of the 12 learners who took part, seven have signed up to receive on-going coaching in the hope they can form a Bolton College team.

The group was supported by sighted learners, with some wearing simulation spectacles to experience the game as a

visually impaired player.

Sheraz Chohan, of Lancashire County Cricket Club, said: "We'd ideally like to set up an amateur league between the colleges, but there is the potential for the players to progress even further within the County and National team if they have the skills and commitment."

Bolton College's curriculum leader for sensory impairment Linda Owens said: "We hope that the positive response from our learners, and with the support of Sheraz, we will have a college team that can compete in the region."

Open evening at East Berkshire College draws a crowd and really packs a punch



Former world champion boxer Barry McGuigan visited East Berkshire College to meet budding young boxers and highlight sport as a route to learning.

The boxing legend welcomed prospective students to the College's Barry McGuigan Boxing Academy (BMBA), signed autographs, answered questions and delivered a special workshop for budding young boxers.

More than 600 visitors attended the event, which formed part of the college's Open Evening.

Mr McGuigan said: "I was given a chance through sport to fulfil my potential as I grew

up, and I want through this programme to give others that chance."

East Berkshire College is the only college in the south-east to offer a Boxing Academy written and approved by Mr McGuigan himself.

It offers young people the chance to study for a nationally recognised qualification whilst training to an elite level alongside professional coaches. The programme, which is approved by the Amateur Boxing Association (ABA), is open to males and females aged 16-19 who enrol on any full-time course at the college.

Police donate broken bicycles for Doncaster College repair qualification



Doncaster College is working with South Yorkshire Police to get a new course up and running.

The qualification, which looks at the repair of bicycles, could not run at the college due to the lack of damaged bicycles they had, for the students to repair as part of the course.

To help, the force has agreed to provide the college with more than enough bikes to run the course, from their property store in Doncaster. PC Dave Chadwick, from the Urban Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), said: "So far we have donated 30 bikes to the college, which would otherwise be collecting

dust in our property store.

"It's an excellent partnership between the college and police and is really pleasing to be able to support young people to develop new skills."

John Ellis, head of motor vehicle at the college said: "Even though they would go for auction I would imagine that they would get very little for them because of the state of repair which is needed with a lot of them, but at least now the students have got the advantage of being able to strip them down and see what's worn and we can repair them."

Student from Central Sussex College wins recording contract at Open Mic contest



Talented Central Sussex College music student Shak Forbes is celebrating after being named winner of the Open Mic UK competition.

The 16-year-old won the national search for new young music talent at the O2 after blowing the judges away with his original rap performance of Mac Miller's 'Best Day Ever', backed by a full choir.

Shak is now set to take the charts by storm after he beat 9,000 other young musicians from across the UK, to scoop first prize of a recording contract worth £30,000, and the chance to release his own single.

Shak, who has been writing original compositions since the age of eight, said: "I have always loved the creativity of making music, and being on stage feels like the right place for me to be."

"However, I never thought I'd win this competition, so it feels amazing!"

Music teacher at the college Steve McCarthy said: "This is an amazing achievement for a young talent and the combination of winning a national competition in addition to his music studies at College is preparing Shak for a strong career in the industry."

Recipe for success at Vision West Notts



More than £1,000 was raised when a principal cooked up an Indian-inspired treat for Association of Colleges (AoC) chief executive Martin Doel.

Vision West Notts principal and chief executive Asha Khemka donned her chef's whites to prepare and serve authentic Asian cuisine to business people and college staff to boost funds for her Inspire and Achieve Foundation.

Educationalist Mrs Khemka set up the foundation in 2008 after growing increasingly

concerned about the effects that the decline of the coal mining and textiles industries were having on communities in Nottinghamshire.

It aims to provide young people with volunteering and mentoring schemes to help them develop the right attitudes and self-confidence to succeed.

Mr Doel, also a trustee of the foundation, was one of over sixty guests to enjoy onion bhajis, cooked by Mrs Khemka, followed by chicken curry and other accompaniments.

Have A Go success at Dearne Valley College



Hands on taster sessions at Dearne Valley College (DVC) have proved a huge success. The Wath-based college hosted a week of Have A Go sessions and workshops to give local young people a chance to build skills for their future.

Almost 300 youngsters took part, which saw participants having a go at various activities whilst meeting tutors, support staff and speaking to current full-time students.

Mark Hepworth, DVC assistant admissions manager said: "Deciding what to do next and indeed where to continue further study can be a difficult decision.

"Our Have a Go taster sessions allowed prospective students to learn new skills but also provided an insight into what college life would be like."

Winds of change at Lowestoft College campus

Lowestoft College's newly refurbished engineering workshop and wind turbine training tower has been officially opened.

The new engineering workshop features state-of-the-art equipment and was made possible thanks to a funding boost of £1.3million from University Campus Suffolk, the Local Strategic Partnership, the Skills Funding Agency and the college's own resources.

The investment also meant improvements could be made to the learning resources centre and refectory. Principal Simon Summers said: "The new engineering workshop is particularly exciting and means our students and apprentices are able to benefit from up-to-date equipment which meets the industry standards."



Derby College host Olympic challenge

Nearly 100 pupils from city schools joined an Olympic challenge at Derby College to introduce them to a wide range of vocational careers, courses and apprenticeships.

The pupils from Leesbrook, Merrill, Sinfon and da Vinci secondary schools took part in a wide range of challenges, including bathing

a doll, grooming a dog and creating nail art designs.

They also made non-alcoholic cocktails culminating in a final activity involving dressing in full construction site safety equipment and then lining up the coloured Olympic rings painted on hard hats in the right order - against the clock.

ncn student illustrates national success



Two years ago Paty Bugarini couldn't draw. Now she's won a prestigious national illustration contest which will put her work in front of major agencies and publishers across the world, after completing ncn's Foundation Degree in Design.

Her work from the course is one of a select few to be included in 'Images 36' New Talent section, published by the Association of Illustrators and used as a directory by art directors all over the world.

Her winning piece of work was The Boy and The Cloud, illustrations for a book she wrote as a final piece of coursework.

It won ncn's Best in Show award, and she has worked as an intern at a design agency.



The Sheffield College launches FM Sports Academy for Parisian football talent

The Sheffield College has launched an academy for up and coming foreign talent seeking to combine academic qualifications with football training.

The FM Sports Academy at Hillsborough College, part of The Sheffield College, has been setup with Sports Etudes in Paris to offer 20 places for 16 to 20 year-olds.

The foreign students can choose to study BTEC diplomas, A-levels, foundation degrees and English courses, while receiving daily coaching and competitive games versus semi-professional clubs. Phil Wymer, a foundation

programme leader at Hillsborough College and director of the academy, said: "These students are very talented and want to sharpen their style and tactics, and develop potential opportunities with local football clubs.

"There's also the appeal of Sheffield being the city of sport and a good tradition at Hillsborough College of delivering sports courses and training."

The college has links with Dinnington Town FC and will be able to offer students the chance to compete in trials at professional clubs such as Manchester City Football Club.

FE Week events...

Colleges, are you ready for the raising of the participation age?

Nick Summers

@summersnicholas

Increasing the minimum age at which young people in England can leave education or training is an unsettling prospect.

No-one can predict with absolute certainty how the further education (FE) sector will adapt to the implementation of mandatory participation up to the age of 17 next year.

The Association of Colleges (AoC) held an event in Paddington last week to give advice on how FE colleges could attract more students during the recruitment period and prepare for increased competition from schools.

Julian Gravatt, assistant chief executive (research and development) at the AoC, said colleges should be preparing an offer which will differentiate themselves from rival learning providers.

"You need to devise an appropriate response, taking into account not only capacity, but also local need, who else is around and doing things and also what the available funds are - what is actually possible," Mr Gravatt said.

Raising the participation age will mean that teenagers aged between 16 and 18 are required, by law, to undertake either 534 hours of full-time education, an apprenticeship, full-time work or volunteering supplemented with 280 hours of part-time education.

Under the reforms, colleges and schools will have a duty to monitor attendance and

employers will need to ensure training is being delivered appropriately to the learner.

Mr Gravatt warned that the implementation of the policy could have a negative impact on the funding allocated for each student.

"After having several years of the 16-18 education budget going up and us as a sector using that very well, the way in which we will get increased numbers in the next few years is partly at the expense of making some quite significant cuts in terms of funding for students," he said.

"It's a policy with desirable ends but is coming in a financial environment which is difficult."

Mr Gravatt said the reform was being used by government as a solution to youth unemployment and the number of people not in education, employment and training (NEET).

"Whatever the law says, or whatever policy used to say, whatever you do think or used to think, the number one issue is tackling youth unemployment. A college can either engage with that and do it well, or it may feel actually others will do it better. It's a choice, but given the priority it's an issue and you should see the full participation for 16-17 year-olds within that context at the moment," he said.

David Russell, director for participation and vocational education at the Department for Education (DfE), agreed with Mr Gravatt and emphasised the government's interest not only in tackling NEETs, but also those currently in jobs without training.

"We know that a very small number of 16 and 17 year-olds in jobs without training, although there are a very small number of them, they only have marginally better outcomes in the long run than those who are NEET," Mr Russell said.

"So we are almost as concerned about those in jobs without training."

David Wood, principal and chief executive of Lancaster and Morecambe College, said from the conference floor: "Some of this seems to be much ado about nothing. It's a very small group of people which we are chasing and at one level EMA is being removed, the fees for higher education have gone up incredibly high, local authorities are losing their authority, academies are increasing competition. All those things seem to be challenging the ability to tackle this group head on."

Mr Wood agreed however that competition from schools would continue to be a huge issue for FE colleges.

"I've got eight schools around me, for 11-18's, who won't let me in. The root of the NEET problem is in poor information and guidance I think, so even though we've got lots of people participating, a lot of them are in the wrong courses and we'll pay for that through their lives," he said.

He added: "What I don't want to be doing, is fighting other providers for those young people."

"What I see at the moment is a fair degree of anarchy and chaos about to emerge for a very small group of people."

Jon Thorn, head of business development at the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), added that apprenticeships shouldn't be seen as a 'one size fits all' solution to the unemployment problem.

He said: "There's always a risk around a programme which is doing well that it does become a solution for every problem or challenge that there might be."

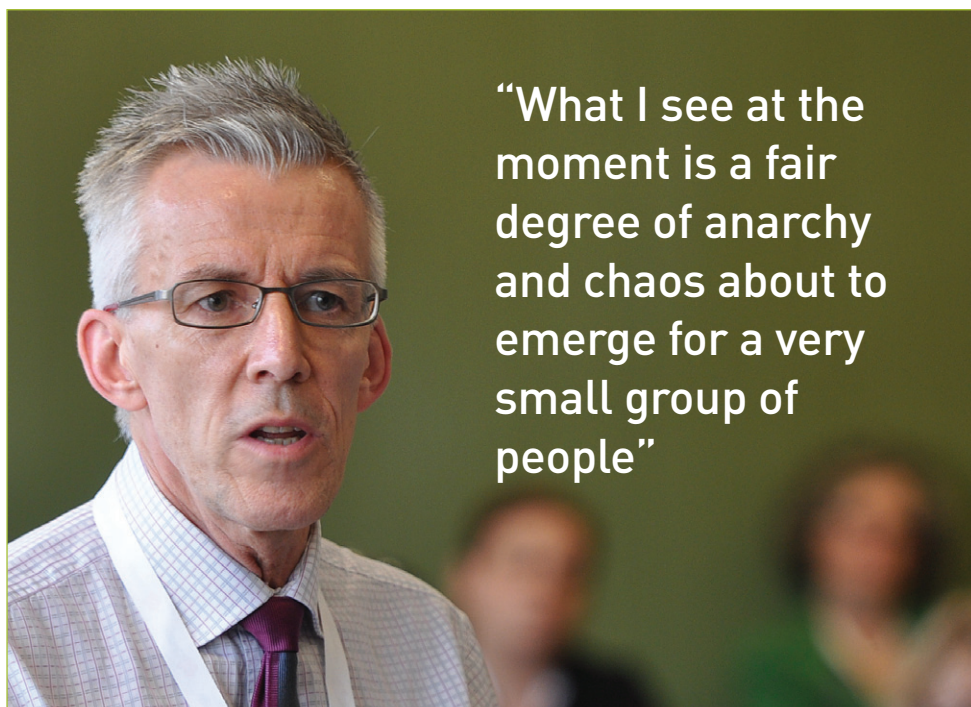
Corrienne Peasgood, deputy principal of City College Norwich, said simply creating more places for students would not be enough to raise the level of participation.

She said: "Between us, I really do believe that we can find enough opportunities for full participation at 16 and then later at 17, but is that enough? I don't think we're in the field of dreams territory. We can be sure that if we build it, they will come."

Raising the participation age is likely to cause some problems for the FE sector, but Fiona McMillan OBE, president of the AoC and principal of Bridgwater College, said it would help young people in the long run.

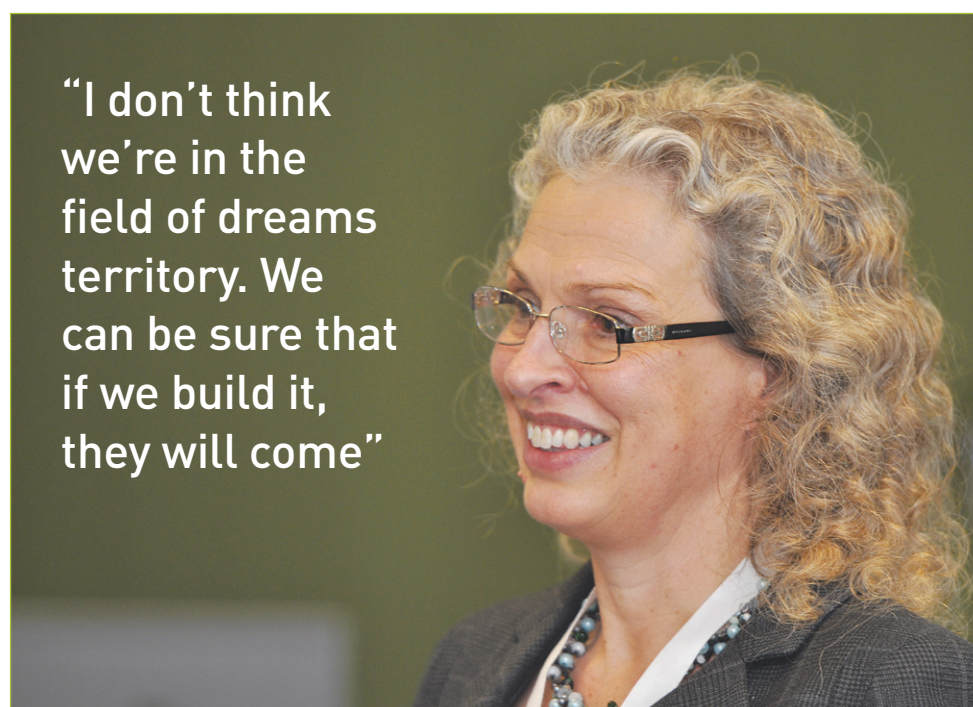
"We all know that not being in education or training beyond 16 means you are considerably more likely to experience being out of work, more likely to have a criminal record, more likely to suffer from low self-esteem and from bouts of depression. There are really strong social, personal and economic reasons for looking at extending the time that young people are in employment, and in training, and are gaining qualifications and valuable experience."





“What I see at the moment is a fair degree of anarchy and chaos about to emerge for a very small group of people”

David Wood, Principal at Lancaster and Morecambe College



“I don’t think we’re in the field of dreams territory. We can be sure that if we build it, they will come”

Corrienne Peasgood, Deputy Principal at City College Norwich



“There are really strong social, personal and economic reasons for looking at extending the participation age ”

Fiona McMillan OBE, President of the AoC and Principal of Bridgwater College



“Our consultation on raising the participation age closes on 13 April 2012”

David Russell, Director of Participation and Vocational Education, Department for Education

Tendering for the 16-17 Youth Contract funding (for more see page 4)

Q&A with Julian Gravatt, Assistant Chief Executive, AoC

Is there a worry the timetable for tendering is too short?

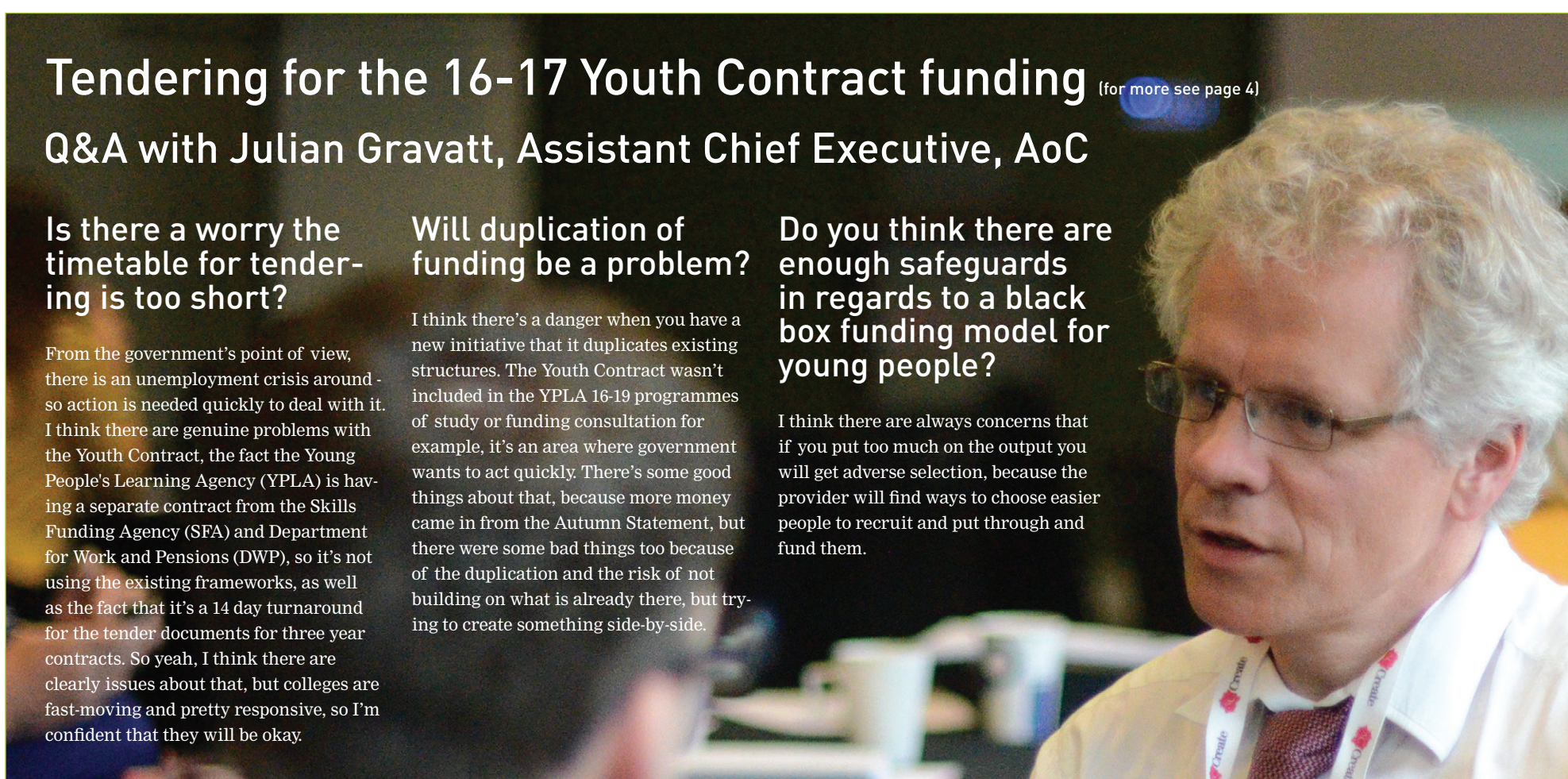
From the government’s point of view, there is an unemployment crisis around - so action is needed quickly to deal with it. I think there are genuine problems with the Youth Contract, the fact the Young People’s Learning Agency (YPLA) is having a separate contract from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), so it’s not using the existing frameworks, as well as the fact that it’s a 14 day turnaround for the tender documents for three year contracts. So yeah, I think there are clearly issues about that, but colleges are fast-moving and pretty responsive, so I’m confident that they will be okay.

Will duplication of funding be a problem?

I think there’s a danger when you have a new initiative that it duplicates existing structures. The Youth Contract wasn’t included in the YPLA 16-19 programmes of study or funding consultation for example, it’s an area where government wants to act quickly. There’s some good things about that, because more money came in from the Autumn Statement, but there were some bad things too because of the duplication and the risk of not building on what is already there, but trying to create something side-by-side.

Do you think there are enough safeguards in regards to a black box funding model for young people?

I think there are always concerns that if you put too much on the output you will get adverse selection, because the provider will find ways to choose easier people to recruit and put through and fund them.



Interested in working at the entrepreneurial edge of FE?

City College Norwich has established a strong reputation as one of the most progressively innovative institutions within Further Education.

For opportunities to join a great college team, please visit www.ccn.ac.uk



CHALLENGING MINDS. INSPIRING SUCCESS.

Raytheon Professional Services

Finance & Funding Manager – UK Apprenticeship Learning

Raytheon Professional Services (RPS) is a division of Raytheon Company and a global leader in training services and outsourcing with a history of training spanning more than 75 years. 1000 learning professionals serve 875,000 training participants in 100 countries and 26 languages.

We are now looking to expand our UK operation and are recruiting for a Finance & Funding Manager.

Location(s) of work: Nottingham & Milton Keynes with occasional travel nationally and to our Head Office.

Responsibilities:

- Management of a small team responsible for MI / Funding for UK Apprenticeships
- Complete MI activities required for the effective management of UK funded apprenticeship programmes
- Costing, establishing budget & pricing of projects and contracts
- Reporting financials to Operations Manager and Senior Leadership Team
- Analysis and reporting of monthly results

Requirements:

- University or FE degree in Business Administration or equivalent qualification
- Recent, relevant work experience in Finance and UK Apprenticeship funding sector
- Strong analytical and communication skills
- Exceptional people management and organisational skills
- Proactively to meet programme deadlines
- Advanced MS Office and internet skills, knowledge and experience of Lotus Notes
- Clean UK Driving License

We offer:

- A challenging position allowing autonomy and creativity
- Remuneration negotiable based on experience
- Company benefit program ("My Benefit")
- International and dynamic teams
- Company Car
- Multicultural environment

Please send us your application with your CV, salary indication and your earliest availability date to rps.emea.career@raytheon.com

Closing date for applications is Friday 2 March 2012



**creative
& cultural
skills**

Creative & Cultural Skills is recruiting

We are extending the reach of the National Skills Academy for Creative & Cultural in 2012-15, and seeking talented individuals to support this development.

Based in either Edinburgh, Belfast, Cardiff or London, you will be working to build partnerships between the education sector and the creative and cultural industries, supporting the development of Creative Apprenticeships and opening up opportunities for young people.

We are looking for a range of skills at different levels – please see www.ccskills.org.uk for more information.

Apprenticeship Manager – Scotland
Apprenticeship Manager – Northern Ireland
Apprenticeship Manager – Wales
Administrator – Northern Ireland
Manager - Wales
Head of Education Partnerships - London
Qualifications Manager - London
Research Assistant - London
PR Coordinator - London

Deadline for all applications is Wednesday 7th March, 12pm



Be part of our bright new future

West Thames College is a vibrant, exciting and successful College of FE and HE.

Our shared vision is to be outstanding in everything we do. It's a great place to work and the perfect time to join us.

Visit west-thames.ac.uk to find out what makes us so special and apply online.

Request our application pack:
020 8560 5582 (24hrs)
or email:
personnel@west-thames.ac.uk

No CV's please



Skills Centre Director Feltham, West London £51,749pa inclusive Permanent/36 hours per week

We're looking for a strong, dynamic leader with a proven track record together with the vision, creativity and drive to secure the long-term future of our Skills Centre based in Feltham, west London.

You will inspire and motivate staff whilst building an excellent reputation for the Centre. You will forge collaborative relations with employers and stakeholders, developing new income streams and implementing strategies to ensure the Skills Centre plays a major role in transforming the future prospects of local people and businesses.

As a pivotal member of the Senior Management Team, you will have overall responsibility for the management of the staff, resources and provision of the Centre, driving up quality and success rates to help position the college as a recognised centre of excellence.

West Thames College is one of the most vibrant and exciting colleges of further and higher education in London. Our vision is to be outstanding in everything we do. Our students consistently achieve high success rates and often win national and international competitions in their respective fields. It's a great place to work and a great time to join us.

Closing date: 10:00am - Monday 12 March 2012

The Selection process will take place over two days – dates to be confirmed



MidKent College based in the Medway Towns and Maidstone is seeking to appoint an outstanding individual in the following area:

Director for Higher Education

Ref: DIR03

Salary: £58,000-£60,000 per annum

MidKent College is seeking to appoint a Director for Higher Education to spearhead it's strategy for expanding and modernising its HE offer. The College currently has an annual income of around £2.3 million from its Higher Education courses. It has invested in a dedicated HE and Professional Studies building in Maidstone and is committed to providing higher education programmes for each area of significant employment in the county.

The successful candidate will have a track record in leading curriculum innovation and change and will understand the context of delivering Higher Education within a Further Education environment. They will be responsible for the College's strategy on Higher Education and its adoption by the College's Governing Body.

Closing date: 12 noon, Wednesday 29 February 2012

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of employment is subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check in accordance with the College procedure.

Application forms and further details are available from www.midkent.ac.uk. Alternatively, please e-mail job.applications@midkent.ac.uk. For individuals without access to e-mail or the internet please call the HR department on 01634 383102 (24 hour answer machine). In all communication with the College please quote the appropriate job title and reference number.

MidKent College is an equal opportunities employer



MidKent College



For more job listings go to
feweek.co.uk and click on
'recruitment'



Associate Director of Business Development

Salary: £50,000 - £55,000 (Market supplement may apply).
Hours: 37 hours per week.

This is an exciting opportunity to be part of a forward thinking, innovative and passionate senior leadership team. The successful candidate will be responsible for employer engagement, full cost and bespoke provision, and partnership development.

Closing Date: 12:00 Friday 16th March 2012

For full vacancy details and to apply visit our website www.esc.ac.uk/careers or contact the Human Resources department on 01737 772611 (option 4).

East Surrey College is committed to Equal Opportunities.



The Oldham College

Careers not courses

Vice Principal of Finance and Resources

Salary £80,000 to £85,000 (Negotiable within range)

Job Reference 11/84a

These are challenging times but ones of real opportunity. At The Oldham College, we want to be at the centre of the regeneration plans for our town and the city region of Greater Manchester.

We believe that through excellent organisation, partnership, imagination and creativity, we can deliver an outstanding curriculum and a rigorous approach to business development, and make a real difference to the future of our community.

We want an outstanding leader, who will work with the Principal and senior team to build a positive culture across the College, place learners at the centre of everything we do, and work with partners to raise spirations, exceed expectations, foster enterprise and create real opportunities.



You will bring significant and successful experience of developing responsive, strategically focused financial services and leading efficient resource management within a large and complex education or related organisation.

The key focus will be to secure our sound financial status whilst we embark upon a period of significant challenge including diversification into an emerging growth and partnership landscape. A sound senior financial track record is essential but we also want someone to bring a fresh approach to the priorities of maximising income and resource management.

For an application pack, please visit: www.oldham.ac.uk/jobs/

Previous applicants need not apply

Closing date: Friday 2nd March 2012 at 12 noon



The Oldham College is an established & highly successful 'Outstanding' (Ofsted) further education provider & we enjoy a sound financial position. At the heart of the Borough of Oldham it has excellent transport facilities & superb motorway links, placing Oldham at the centre of the UK road system. The College is a vibrant multi-ethnic community located close to the Pennines, an area of outstanding natural beauty.

Seasonal spot the difference

In honour of entering Spring this week, see if you can spot the five differences between the four season trees.
Once you think you've spotted all five, turn the paper upside down to read the answers.

Enjoy!



Answers (changes made to picture on the right): The butterfly is orange, the smaller squirrel has been removed, the tree trunk and branches are brown, the largest sunflower has been removed and the bird on the lowest branch is larger.

FE Week Sudoku challenge

	7				8	2		4
			2	6	9	8		
5					3			1
	2			5		6		3
9			4		2			8
1		8		7				5
3			6					9
		1	3	9	7			
2		6	1					4

Difficulty:
EASY

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

	1			4				
		3	7		2			4
		6				7	1	
	5			7			3	
1			9		3			5
	3			2			7	
	9	5				4		
6			4		7	3		
				9			2	

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Last Week's solutions

6	7	8	2	4	3	1	5	9
4	5	3	9	7	1	2	6	8
9	2	1	6	8	5	7	3	4
3	4	7	1	6	8	9	2	5
5	9	6	7	3	2	8	4	1
8	1	2	5	9	4	6	7	3
1	8	4	3	2	6	5	9	7
7	6	5	4	1	9	3	8	2
2	3	9	8	5	7	4	1	6

Difficulty:
EASY

3	4	5	1	2	8	6	7	9
1	7	9	4	3	6	5	2	8
2	6	8	5	9	7	1	4	3
4	9	1	7	6	2	3	8	5
8	2	7	9	5	3	4	6	1
5	3	6	8	1	4	7	9	2
6	5	4	3	8	9	2	1	7
7	8	3	2	4	1	9	5	6
9	1	2	6	7	5	8	3	4

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week's* biggest and smallest fan!



"Mostly this week I have been helping around the house"

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter @daniellinford